Credit to African Nations

3171. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Govt, have promised to extend $ 500 million in concessionary credit to eight African nations;

(b) if so, whether Goverments had held talks with any of the African nations in this regard;

(c) if so, the details discussed in the meeting; and

(d) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) I held meeting with Ministers of 8 African nations on July 3, 2005.

(d) The Government of India conveyed its approval for a concessionary credit under the TEAM-9 programme for some of the projects submitted by the 8 African nations *i.e.* (i) Senegal (ii) Ghana (iii) Chad (iv) Mali (v) Burkina Faso (vi) Cote d'lvoire (vii) Guinea Bissau (viii) Equatorial Guinea.

The Ministers of these countries were advised to follow clear and transparent procedures in selecting the Indian companies that would execute the projects approved under Indian lines of credit.

Submission of Passport Applications

†3172. SHRI VASANT CHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it has been made mandatory to take prior date through internet for submission of application for new passport;

(b) if so, whether this rule is applicable in Mumbai only;

(c) if so, whether there is any other facility provided to the person not able to use the internet or the uneducated person; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefore and the time expected to be consumed for the issuance of new passport now?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) It is not mandatory to go for online internet registration for submission of passport applications in all passport offices in India, except in Mumbai where it has been started on an experimental basis from March 2005. However, in Regional Passport Office, Mumbai, even after internet registration, applicants do have the choice to submit their applications on a day other than the specified date. Online internet registration is also not necessary if application is submitted through any of the District passport Centres in Mumbai.

(c) and (d) The facility to do online registration has been provided within the office premises of Regional Passport Office in Mumbai. The registration is done free of cost; and it takes around 50 days to issue a fresh passport.

Cross Border Terrorism

3173. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent to which the cross-border terrorism disrupted the peace talks between Indian and Pakistan;

(b) whether Government have detected any terrorist camps on the border line of India and Pakistan and the number of intruders arrested and detained in prison at present; and

(c) the present stage of peace talks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Government are aware of the existence of a number of terrorist training camps in Pakistan and PoK. There has been a spurt in the level of infiltration across the Line of Control (LoC) in June-July 2005. In 2005 (till July), in Jammu & Kashmir, 37 infiltration bids were foiled and 127 terrorists killed in foiled infiltration bids.

The Government has, in its interaction with Pakistan at all levels, continuously stressed the fact that Pakistan has so far not taken any significant action to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism, such as communications, launching pads, training camps and funding.

Government is monitoring the situation very closely, and has made it clear to Pakistan that the premise on which the present dialogue process